

7-13-1965

Henri Temianka Correspondence; (agoldberg)

Henri Temianka

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Description

This collection contains material pertaining to the life, career, and activities of Henri Temianka, violin virtuoso, conductor, music teacher, and author. Materials include correspondence, concert programs and flyers, music scores, photographs, and books.

Keywords

Henri Temianka, Albert Goldberg, July 13, 1965, culture, virtuosity in musical performance, culture, violinist, chamber music, newspaper, press, music criticism, discontent, Concerto for String Quartet and Orchestra, - Lees, Benjamin, 1924-2010, musical recordings, audience

July 13, 1965

Mr. Albert Goldberg, Music Critic
The Los Angeles Times
202 West 1st Street
Los Angeles, California

Dear Albert,

I returned from the American Symphony Orchestra League Conference at Asilomar just in time to read your article on the withholding of the Pulitzer Prize Award. One of the works nominated was the Concerto for String Quartet and Orchestra by Benjamin Lees, which was commissioned for the Kansas City Philharmonic Orchestra by the Sosland Foundation. It was given its world premiere by the Paganini Quartet and the Kansas City Philharmonic under its regular conductor, Hans Schwieger, in Kansas City on January 19 and 20 of this year. Thomas Sherman, music critic of the Saint Louis Post Dispatch and a member of the Pulitzer Prize Advisory Board, heard both performances and was impressed enough to nominate the work for the Pulitzer Prize. A tape of the performance was made available for the purpose, so that the members of the Board were able to hear the music and study the score.

George Szell and William Steinberg, no reckless promoters of new music, are presenting the Lees work next season with the Cleveland and Pittsburgh orchestras respectively.

The Kansas City audience response to the first performance was tremendous. I can recall no other instance in my personal experience in recent years when a new symphonic work proved to have such immediate appeal and impact. It is a work of major symphonic proportions and in this sense meets the requirements you alluded to. It is neither radically extreme nor overly conservative. It bristles with vitality. While I do not claim it to be the perfect masterpiece it is the work of a talented, individualistic, honest and intelligent composer who greatly deserves encouragement and support. I was reconfirmed in this opinion when we performed the work again last week at Asilomar.

I do not know what other works were submitted to the Pulitzer Prize Advisory Board, but on the basis of this one work, I consider the withholding of the award unfair and damaging to the cause of American music.

Yours sincerely,

Henri Temianka

HT:ab